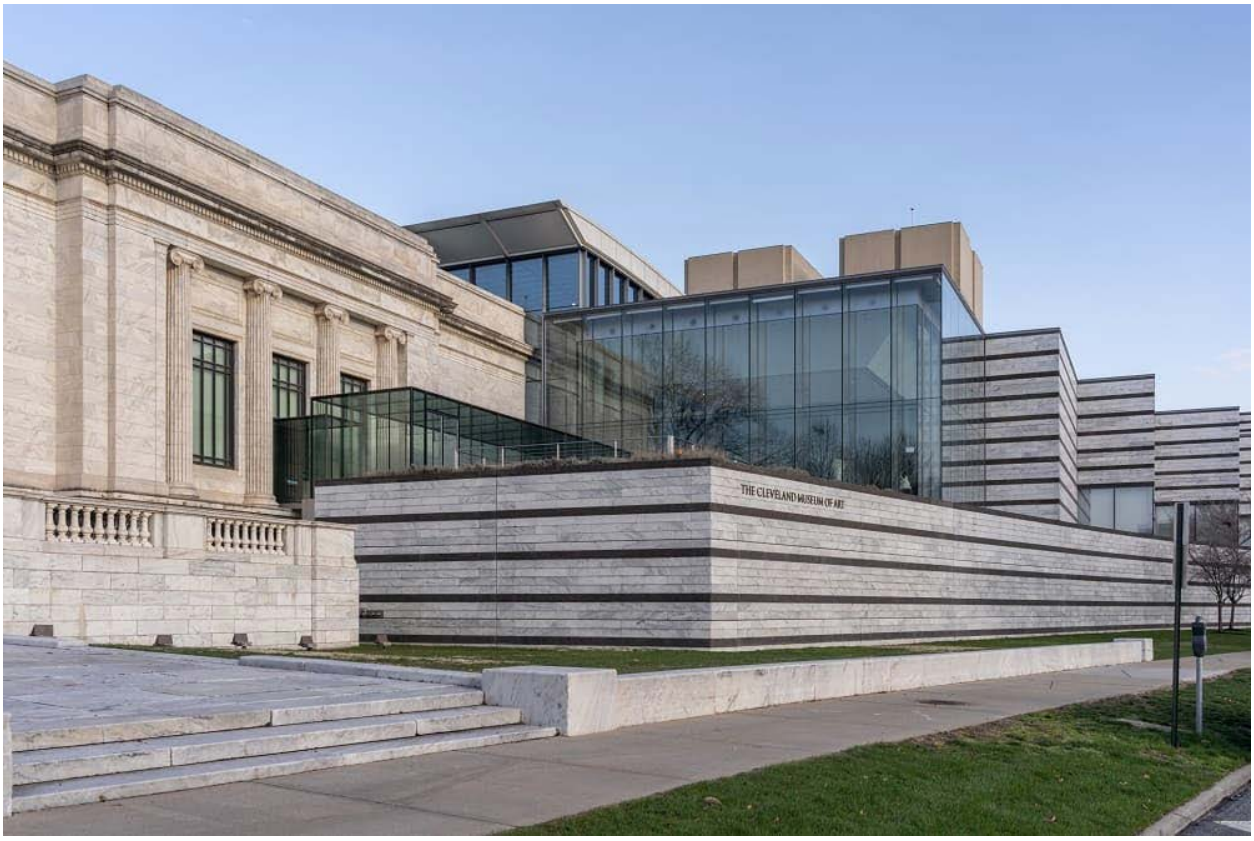
The Cleveland Museum of Art Announces New Acquisitions

Tuesday January 17, 2023



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Cleveland (January 17, 2023)—Recent acquisitions by the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) include a Korean abstract expressionist painting by Yun Hyong-keun (윤형근); a ten-panel folding screen by Kim Yoon-bo (김윤보); an early masterpiece by James Tissot from his English period; and a recently discovered full-length pastel portrait by Hugh Douglas Hamilton, the most celebrated Irish portraitist of the Grand Tour.

***Umber-Black*, Yun Hyong-keun (윤형근)**

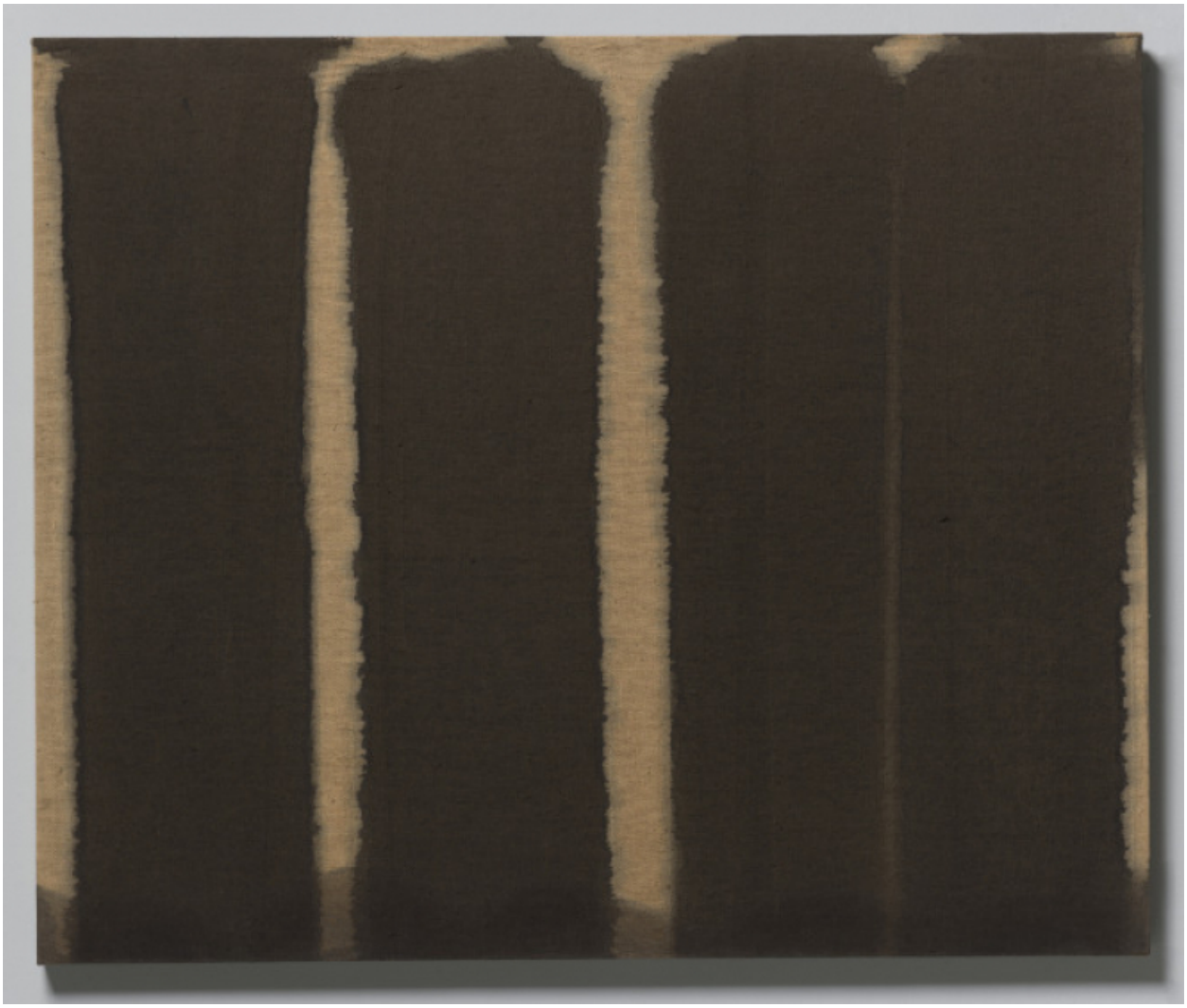
The CMA's celebrated collection of Abstract Expressionist works becomes more global and inclusive with this newest acquisition

Yun Hyong-keun (1928–2007) was a pioneer of Korean abstract expressionism, closely associated with Dansaekhwa movement (단색화). Literally translated as “monochrome painting,” Dansaekhwa artists experimented with readily available materials including mulberry paper, burlap, and charcoal through innovative methods such soaking pigments and paper, ripping the canvas, and dragging the pencil or charcoal.

Dated to 1975, this newly acquired *Umber-Black* is one of the earliest pieces that defines Yun’s long-lasting signature style. Sparsely placed dark pillars that extend the height of the canvas exemplify the forms for which Yun is most celebrated today. Yun explained in his diary that the blank space in between the pillars evokes a pathway into “the gate of heaven and earth,” with blue representing heaven, and umber, earth. The heaven and earth in Yun’s paintings, however, are not a minimalistic depiction of a peaceful cosmos. They were an imagined sacred sanctuary in which the artist could freely express his repressed anger and frustration toward the postwar military dictatorship in South Korea. Yun’s *Umber-Black* will make its debut to the public, along with works by two prominent Korean contemporary artists, Lee Ufan (b. 1936) and Lee Bul (b. 1964), in the upcoming installation in the Korea Foundation gallery (April–October 2023).

The acquisition of *Umber-Black* was made possible by the Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund.

Image



Umber-Black, 1975. Yun Hyong-keun (윤형근) (Korean, 1928–2007). Oil on linen; 93.5 x 113 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund, 2022.142

***Cityscape of Pyongyang*, Kim Yoon-bo (김윤보)**

Ten-panel folding screen depicting the 19th-century city of Pyongyang is the finest example of its type in the US

In addition to adding a major modernist work by Yun Hyong-keun to the collection of Korean art, the CMA continues to augment the collection of historical Korean paintings. *Cityscape of Pyongyang* (평양도병), created in the late 1800s, is a ten-panel folding screen by Kim

Yoon-bo (김윤보) (Korean, 1863–1938). Drawn in ink and pale colors on silk, each panel describes famous historical and natural sites located in the city of Pyongyang, the second largest city during the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910). With a growing interest in cartography, landscape paintings that highlight the topographic features of natural wonder as well as urban scenery became widely popular among 19th-century Korean ruling elites. This screen painted by Kim Yoon-bo, a celebrated artist and a native of Pyongyang, is unique for its outstanding artistic quality among American museum collections. Since most of the architectural sites such as the Temple of Infinite Brightness (영명사) and the Shrine of Military Heroes (무열사), detailed in this folding screen, were destroyed during the Korean War (1950–53), this surviving image of Pyongyang now serves as a token of memory and loss.

The acquisition of the *Cityscape in Pyongyang* was made possible by the Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund.

Image

Cityscape of Pyongyang (평양도병), late 1800s. Kim Yoon-bo (김윤보) (Korean, 1863–1938). Ten-panel folding screen; ink and color on silk; painting: 98.3 x 307.3 cm; overall framed: 210.2 x 325.5 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Severance and Greta Millikin Purchase Fund, 2022.141

James Tissot's *Two Figures at a Door (The Proposal)*

A masterful example of the artist's mature style, this newest acquisition is an impressive addition to the CMA's 19th-century European painting collection

Two Figures at a Door (The Proposal) displays the hallmarks of James Tissot's finest paintings with its personal blending of precise drawing, brilliant color, concern with modern life, and attention to the sophisticated fashions of the new, urban, middle class. Born and trained in France, Tissot was an artist who straddled the worlds of French Impressionism and British Victorian art. He painted this work at a pivotal moment in his career when he was trying to establish himself in the British art world by focusing on subjects that would appeal to the Victorian taste for narrative subjects.

Documented in the artist's photo albums, *Two Figures at a Door* remained in private collections and was unknown to scholars until 2013. Although the original title has been lost, the painting presumably depicts a couple just after the man has proposed marriage and is waiting for a reply. The doorway may have a symbolic meaning: will she let him cross the "threshold" into her life, or leave him outside? During this moment of suspense, the viewer's attention is drawn to the woman's sumptuous dress, the rich patterns of curtains and chair upholstery, and sunlight streaming into the room, backlighting the figure's faces. This painting will be on view in the Victoire and Alfred Rankin Jr. Gallery of 19th-century European art at the CMA beginning January 31, 2023.

"We are incredibly grateful to the Kovel family, as well as the John L. Severance Fund, for the acquisition of this artwork," said William Griswold, CMA director and president. "Previously on display only in a private collection, we are now able to share this remarkable piece of Tissot's work with the public thanks to the generosity of the Kovels. It is through the support of our donors that our collection continues to grow, inspire, and create transformative experiences."

"Our family appreciates the museum's effort and commitment to make this happen," said Terry Kovel. "We are honored that the painting is going to such a good home and will now be on view for the many visitors to the museum to enjoy. My late husband Ralph and my parents Rix and Isadore Horvitz would be thrilled to see it in such a special place."

Two Figures at a Door (The Proposal), 1872. James Tissot (French, 1836–1902). Oil on canvas; unframed: 101 x 61.5 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Ralph and Terry Kovel and Family and the John L. Severance Fund, 2022.140

Hugh Douglas Hamilton's *George Clavering Cowper*

Full-length pastel portrait enhances the CMA's collection of pastels, a strength of its drawings collection

Preserved in remarkable condition, this portrait has remained in the sitter's family—and was discovered only recently in the collection of the descendants of its sitter, George Clavering Cowper, 3rd Earl Cowper (1738–1789), of Great Britain. The full-length pastel was a type developed during the 18th century that appealed to English tourists on the Grand Tour to Italy. The earl, a cultural paragon in Italy and a patron of artists and composers, sat for the most celebrated Irish portraitist of the Grand Tour, Hugh Douglas Hamilton, in Florence, where he made his home.

Cowper prominently wears the sash and star of the which he had received in March 1785. The Order of Saint Hubertus was founded in 1695, a knightly order of aristocratic hunters from throughout the Hapsburg empire, whose motto was "Honoring God by Honoring his Creatures." Evoking the emotion of this motto, Hamilton featured Cowper's hunting dog, who receives a tender pat on the head and wears a collar inscribed with Cowper's name.

The acquisition of *George Clavering Cowper, 3rd Earl Cowper* was made possible by the Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund.

George Clavering Cowper, 3rd Earl Cowper, 1785. Hugh Douglas Hamilton (Irish, 1729–1808). Pastel on paper stretched on linen; sheet: 94 x 68.6 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna Jr. Fund, 2022.136